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The Honorable Louis Stokes, Chairman
Permanent Select Committee on
Intelligence
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing to elicit your views and those of other Committee Members about a modest change the Agency is proposing to make in its personnel management program. We propose to institute a two-year pilot leave sharing program which would permit Agency employed couples to donate sick or annual leave to one or the other during the first six months after the birth or the adoption of a child. This change will involve no additional dollar increases to the Agency.

Although we fully briefed Calvin Humphrey of your staff on 7 March about the particulars of this proposal, let me summarize some of the key reasons why we think this leave sharing program is timely and appropriate. First, over the last ten years the Agency has experienced a significant increase in the number of women employees which is causing an increased need for and use of maternity leave. Second, 11% of Agency employees are now married to other Agency employees, and we expect this percentage to increase. The working conditions, including overseas assignments and the severe security restrictions under which our people work, simply create the conditions and incentives for our people to seek the company of one another and to marry. Finally, we are finding that our current leave policies lack the flexibility we need to retain the most needed spouse during the early months after the birth of a child. For example, a couple may find it necessary to stay home for 15 weeks to care for a newborn infant. The wife may have 120 hours of leave and the husband 240 hours. If the couple is unable to meet expenses on one salary and the wife uses all the leave she has or can be advanced, the couple may find it necessary for the husband to stay home with the child in order to prevent the wife from entering into a leave without pay status. The husband may be assigned to a time-sensitive project whereas the wife may work in an area where there is appropriate substantive backup. The couple may prefer that

the wife stay at home with the child for the entire period, and the Agency, in pursuit of mission requirements, may prefer that as well, but our current policy would not allow that choice. If the husband could transfer leave to his wife, however, both the Agency's and the couple's needs could be met.

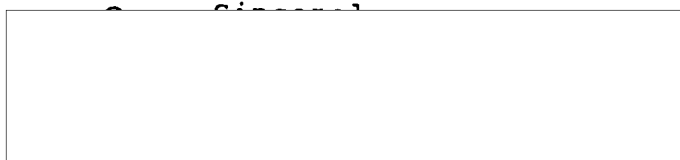
Given the current and projected demographic changes in the Agency population, we believe such situations will arise more frequently. Our proposed spousal leave donation program would provide the needed management flexibility to solve these problems in the interest of Agency priorities while assisting employees during a time of need. We also know it will build a stronger sense of loyalty and commitment from our employees. Such loyalty is an intangible which is of significant value to our Agency. We need employees who will devote themselves to a long term career.

When we talked with Mr. Humphrey, we advised him that we had no intention of implementing this proposal until we had obtained Committee views. We believe that we must consult with the Committee before we institute such changes to our personnel management policies. This practice is in keeping with both the spirit and the language contained in your Committee Conference Report accompanying the 1988 Authorization Act.

I underscore that this proposed action is a two-year experiment designed to deal with a very real human and management problem. It is not intended to alter overall compensation or benefits to Agency employees, nor to prejudice the outcome of the NAPA study.

In sum, Mr. Chairman, I think everyone wins through this spousal leave sharing program -- both the Agency and the employees. However, before we do anything, we want to elicit your and the Committee Members' views and reactions to this proposal.

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/s/ John L. Helgerson
Director of Congressional Affairs

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